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Urban Growth of a City Under Siege: Tulkarm, Palestine Over the Past Century

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Tulkarm city experienced planning and regulation of its development under five different regimes during the past century. These regimes left their footprints on the city's physical structure, affected its growth pattern, and affected its quality of life. Ottoman rule, the British Mandate, Jordanian rule, Israeli Occupation and the Palestinian National Authority each ruled the area and contributed to the recent shape and physical spatial structure of Tulkarm City. This study highlights the major changes and influences on the city's growth pattern and physical spatial structure during the past century.

Keywords: Ottoman; spatial structure; Palestine; Tulkarm; land tenure; urban growth

Human settlements represent historical spatial structure and development of the society and its physical environment and represent a composition of several elements such as physical environment, society and culture, and the planning system, which together form that communal space. The spatial structure of settlement has always been affected by decisions taken by people living within it. This system aims to control and manage the physical spatial structure of settlement by two means institutional arrangements and instrumental representations.

In some cities, intercommunal conflict and violence reflecting ethnic or nationalist fractures has affected the city structure and development processes, places such as Belfast, Johannesburg, Nicosia, New Delhi, Hong Kong, and Brussels.[1] Other cities are the war-torn urban areas, including border cities. The international border has had a mixed, regionally differentiated and town-selective impact on the process of urbanization in the border region like what happened in the India and Pakistan border area in 1947.[1,2] Another example of border cities is the twin cities, which have "twin communities" living side by side as paired settlements where

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physical proximity implies a certain relationship and interaction like the U.S.–Mexican border towns.[3]

This study identifies the influences of different ruling regimes on Palestinian urban growth and city development. The significance of studying Palestine, in general, and Tulkarm city, in particular, is that over the last 200 years Palestine has been shaped by five fundamentally different physical planning systems. These systems drastically affected the physical spatial structure of Palestinian settlements. Tulkarm represents a unique example where a border line in 1948 cut it from its farmland and at the same time the town hosted thousands of Palestinian refugees. Later in 1967, the town was occupied and land use planning became that of the occupying authority.

Historical Background

Ancient Falestina, Palestina, or Palestine is considered the land between the Mediterranean and River Jordan has been inhibited by Arabs for more than 9,000 years. It became part of the Ottoman Empire, a relationship that lasted for four centuries. At the time of the break up of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, more than 90 percent of the population of Palestine was Arab.[4]

After the dissolution of the Ottoman regime, Palestine was ruled by Great Britain under the 1922 Mandate created through the League of Nations. The Mandate required that Britain foster the creation of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine. In 1948, after World War II during which 750,000 Palestinians were made homeless (dispersed in many surrounding countries), a cease-fire was declared leaving the new State of Israel in control of 77 percent of Palestine.[5] The areas of Palestine not within the new state of Israel included the Gaza Strip (which was taken under Egyptian administration), and the area immediately west of the River Jordan (which was incorporated into Kingdom of Jordan and become known as the "West Bank."[6]

In 1967, Israel invaded and occupied the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as well as Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights (Figure 1). As a result of the Oslo Accords in 1993, the Palestinian National Authority started to gradually rule some cities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Ultimately, the West Bank came under Israeli control after the second Intifada in 2000.

From the closing days of Ottoman rule to the present, each regime left its distinct footprint on the physical and social fabric of places like Tulkarm. The planning and political processes affected land use, land coverage, and the social fabric of urban and rural settings in the area.

Over the past century, Palestine has had four different ruling authorities, each of which affected the physical spatial structure of Palestinian in different and profound ways. Due to different land tenure systems and legislations,

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Figure 1: Study site

the spatial structure was affected Because each regime imposed its own regulations and land use controls and these were physically manifested in the resulting urban form.

Under the Ottoman regime, land was held in common or *Musha'*, by all the inhabitants of the village, and apportioned at different times to the individual farmers according to their ability and depending on the number of cattle used for plowing. The right of an individual or family to cultivate part of this common land was handed down from father to son but the land itself did not belong to the village but to the Ottoman State (*millet*). The lands of the village were distributed annually, or once every two or three years, among the immediate or extended families.[5] Lands were divided into various categories according to the quality, situation, nature of the terrain, and proximity to water. The resulting blocks were then subdivided into parcels according to the number of families.

A code on land was created in 1858 with the immediate objective being to tax every piece of land. This purpose was to be achieved by clearly

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establishing the title to the land by registering its legal owner.[5] Most of the land under the Ottoman regime was owned by the state with large areas set aside for religious and charitable purposes and controlled by the regional commander or *Pasha*. People were allowed to cultivate land but not to mortgage or sell it. A new Land Ordinance in 1921 allowed people who cultivated unoccupied, hilly, scrub wood land or *Mawat*, to gain title on payment of the unimproved value of the land. The sites of many towns and villages were extended and enlarged, giving an active farmer the means to increase his holdings. By 1923, nearly 75 percent of lands previously owned by the state (*Musha'*) now were owned by individuals who lived in towns.[7]

Palestinian villages were built on top or on the sides of hills, allowing them to command views of the surrounding country. Houses were built like forts close together for safety and security purposes in addition to conserving materials by sharing walls. The traditional Palestinian village contained two public buildings: the village mosque or *masjid*, and the guest house or *madafe*, which served both as a reception room for guests coming to the village and as a meeting place for village council or elders.[8]

It has been claimed that town planning law did not exist in Palestine before 1921[9] because Ottoman town planning or its regulation did not exist in the region. There was no intention of the Ottoman authorities to impose a planning system.[10] But the various Ottoman land regulations represented a quasi system of land planning.

Under the British Mandate after World War I however, Palestine experienced, for the first time, a comprehensive planning system. The Town Planning Ordinance, issued in 1921 by the British in Palestine, incorporated a mandatory planning authority that introduced new measures for development control under the 1921 ordinance, planning schemes for several Palestinian settlements.[11]

By the end of the British Mandate and the establishment of Israel in 1948, Palestinian settlements experienced a new period of growth under a new system. In the West Bank, which was under Jordanian rule, both rural and urban settlements were affected. It was evident that rates of urban growth in built-up areas were fairly high. In most of the Palestinian villages and towns, the number of buildings increased due to immigration from the sector under Israeli control.[12] The urban settlements witnessed increased building sprawl and the general layout and size shifted expansion of their municipal boundaries.[13]

In 1967, the remainder of Palestine (West Bank and Gaza Strip) came under Israeli control. This affected the physical planning structure of the settlement layout. Many military ordinances were issued by the Israeli authorities to control and minimize urban growth and expansion in the Palestinian settlements.[4]

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Under Israeli authority, building permits were required for all construction, regardless of type or location, outside the boundaries of towns. Tulkarm was one of twenty-five towns that had a municipal council. The process of obtaining building permits under Israeli rule became complicated because it required the proof of ownership of the parcel of land on which the building was planned,[14] a difficult task after 2000 years of land use, varied tenants, and function. Otherwise under Israeli control, all construction in the rural or semirural towns or villages of the West Bank, where 70 percent of the population lived, required the approval of the Central Planning Department and Higher Planning Council, which was run by Israeli military officers.

Assessment and Analysis

Demographic Trends

Right up until the early 1900s, Tulkarm was a small village, but it has been expanding since then because of its function as an important crossroads. Over the past century, Tulkarm developed rapidly from a village of population less than 2,000 and 88 buildings to a city of 39,058 people (Figure 2) and 3,782 buildings in 1985.[15]

This process came to a halt in the 1930s with the construction of the Petah Tiqva-Hadera Highway, which bypassed the town to the west. Despite the fact that Israel–Jordan Armistice Border of 1948 encircled Tulkarm on the west side, the town population increased considerably in its new role as an administrative center. Farming in its surrounding lands intensified because most farmers lost their fertile properties near the coast when Israel confiscated these lands in 1948.[16]

Between 1931 and 1961, Tulkarm and its satellite towns of Shuweike, Dhinnabe, and Irtah maintained an average population increase of around 2 percent. There was a leap in the population of Tulkarm town after 1948 with the settlement of the Palestinian refugees. Subsequently, the population of Tulkarm dropped dramatically after the war of 1967 when the Israeli occupation forced thousands of Palestinians to flee to Jordan.[6]

Planning and Development

Under the Ottoman rule, Tulkarm was a small village under the administration of Nablus district. In 1892, Tulkarm was made a municipality and a center for the area (county seat). According to Hindawi,[17] Tulkarm was chosen as a center for the area because of its central location at the junction of important transports routes, and its capability for growth and development.

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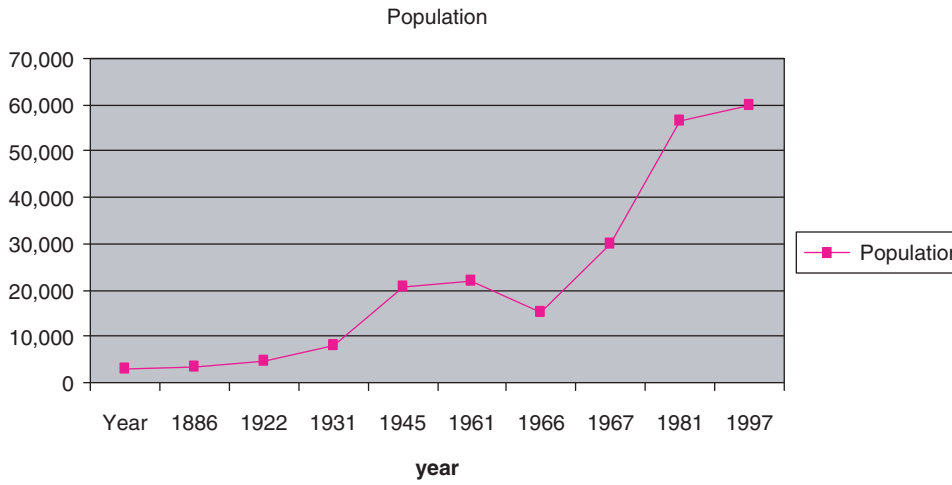

Figure 2: Population trend (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics)
Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. General census for Palestinian communities (Ramallah, 1997).

Before 1892, Tulkarm represented a typical Palestinian village of the period with a compact traditional structure focused on a crossroads-style layout. Palmer and Beasant[18] described it as "a long straggling village on high ground above the plain to the west is a small garden of figs besides which are the threshing floor and a well. There is a second well on the north in the valley" (Figure 3).

The core area of this small village had a small public space in front of a small mosque. The mosque was at the western edge of the village providing an obvious landmark when viewed from the west and a community node. Yet with the expansion of the town northward and westward, and the increasing importance of the main Nablus–Tulkarm–Jaffa Road, the open space of the town now shifted to a vacant site on its northwest corner[19] and away from the small mosque (public square).

Before 1892, Tulkarm was a single village with several yards, courtyards, cul-de-sacs, all serviced by one mosque. After becoming a municipality, Tulkarm was affected by several changes which greatly influenced its satellite communities. A government building, post office, hospital, school, and municipality offices were erected on the northern side of the town attracting considerable expansion of the town to this side.

These fringe neighborhoods did not constitute town additions but merely names for existing clusters and places merely representing a distribution of buildings without services or roads.

Tulkarm's growth during this period was more a function of expanding toward town concentration that followed topography and road networks rather than due to any existing planning strategies.

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Figure 3: Tulkarm center in the nineteenth century (Tulkarm Municipality, Engineering Department archive section).

The fringe or *Al Judur* of a typical Palestinian village consists of a semi-green area of orchards, vineyards, and olive trees with threshing floors in between and beyond the city center.[16] After being a municipality, buildings of Tulkarem began to creep on these fringes, especially from the west. The green areas at the fringe were penetrated by the building sprawl pushing the limits of the fringe outwards (Figure 4).

Two important projects were established in the open land beyond the fringe of Tulkarm during the Ottoman rule. The first was the Hejazi railway line "Lydda–Tulkarm–Nablus" and the railway station. The second project was the agriculture school, which was established by the municipality by the end of the Ottoman rule.[17]

Tulkarm village was characterized with a very random road network. Yet it represented a focal point for several roads radiating in all directions. After 1892 Tulkarm roads developed to a web-like grid with some concentration on the road between the government building and the municipal gardens.[20]

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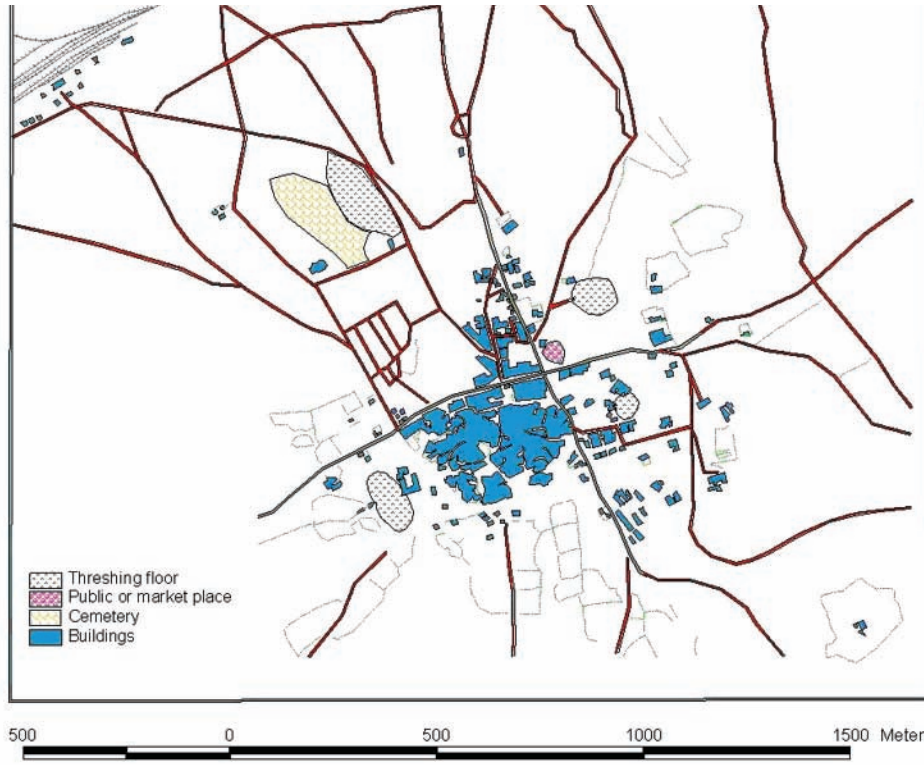

Figure 4: Tulkarm, nineteenth century
Source: A. Mahrouk, "Physical Planning Systems and the Physical Spatial Structure of the Human Settlements," (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Mackintosh University, UK, 1995).

All the roads of Tulkarm followed natural tracks between agricultural land with no alignment since there were no surveys or mapping. These roads represented the growth pattern of the small village, where residential units followed these access in a radial way, starting from the core, leading to fringe area.

Tulkarm Under the British Mandate (1917-1946)

After World War I, Palestine was ruled by Great Britain under the Sykes–Picot Act through the League of Nations. This Mandate also required that the British fostered the creation of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine under the Balfor Declaration.[21]

After the end of Ottoman rule and the emergence of the British Mandate, Palestinian settlements entered a new era where the proximity to faming land began to gain more importance.[13] The physical structure of the Palestinian settlements in this period was affected due to establishing of new Jewish colonies, the improving of accessibility due to improving of road

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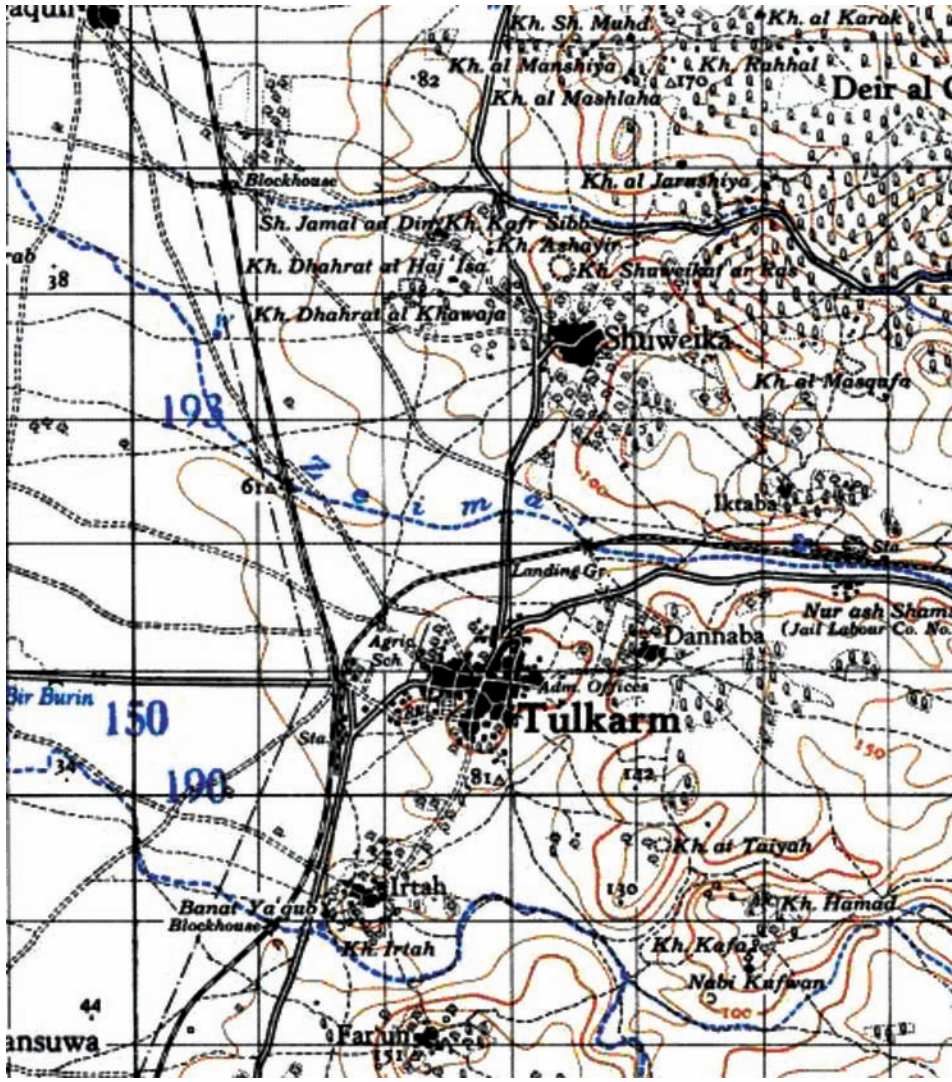

Figure 5: Tulkarm and its suburbs under the British rule (Tulkarm Municipality, archive section)

networks, new construction methods, land registration and land subdivision process, and planning efforts done by the authority.[22] The Palestinians began to gather inside existing towns and villages for security reasons, so these towns witnessed a considerable growth. For example, with the number of buildings increasing six times within the town of Tulkarm, four times within the villages of Dannaba and Shuweika, and 2.6 times within the village of Irtah,[23] population soared from 7,000 to 20,000 (Figure 5).

The first Town Planning Scheme was approved for Tulkarm in 1945 to accommodate the rapid increase in its population and its built-up area. No

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formal change was introduced in the central area of Tulkarm until 1945 when its Outline Town Planning Scheme was prepared, by that time there was a development of the town in all directions. Commercial activities continued to develop along the main North–South and East–West access of the town and westwards opposite to the old public square. The scheme proposed commercial zones along these roads (the original Roman crossroads of the Cardo and Decumanus).

According to the Tulkarm Scheme 1945, the town was clearly divided by the two main accesses into four neighborhoods. Each of these neighborhoods was divided into residential zones with a special building density for each zone. All four neighborhoods met at the intersection of the two main accesses crossroads and had a good share of the commercial zones along these accesses.

Since the early days of the British Mandate, the land pattern on the fringe of Tulkarm continued to be characterized by building sprawl. No policy to control this sprawl or preserve the green fringe around the town appeared until the Tulkarm Scheme of 1945 was prepared and implemented.

It is notable that the mandatory planning system in Tulkarm permitted the construction of buildings in the agricultural zone without a formidable policy for the control and management of these buildings. The result was damage to the character of this important zone.

The new laws of land use planning were regarded by the British as a toolkit for excluding and managing different colonial ethnic groups(e.g., in Malaya and Kenya),[24] and in Palestine contributed to depriving Palestinians of their land use rights and redefining them as contravenors of planning control. The mandate Planning Act of 1921 and 1936 provided the framework, and were incorporated into Israeli Law as the planning and building law of 1965 (amended in 1990), which created a British-style system of development plans, control over development, managed by local authorities and the national planning and building board.[25] Land could be declared a closed area, security zone, green area, or nature reserve, all of which allowed Palestinian use rights to be extinguished.

No major changes were introduced to the open land beyond the fringe of Tulkarm in the early days of the Mandate. The only project affecting this area was the railway line from Tulkarm to Haifa established in the late 1910s. Several road projects, such as Tulkarm–Netania road, were proposed and constructed in the area in the late 1920s.

The development of the road system of Tulkarm progressed slowly during the first decade of the British Mandate. Until 1928, the main achievement was the alignment of existing roads to the west and north of the town. At the beginning of the 1930s, a proposal was prepared to develop the Jaffa–Tulkarm–Nablus road. The proposal aimed to prevent the -aforementioned road from passing through the centre of the town. Acquisition of land for highways was a

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means of isolating Palestinian settlements and severing them from their farmland. The mandate Width and Alignment of Roads Ordinance 1926-1927 prohibited dwellings a certain distance from the road center-line, and was used to justify demolition of Palestinian dwelling near the road.[26]

Tulkarm Under Jordanian Rule (1948-1967)

By the end the British Mandate and the establishment of "Israel" in 1948 when 77 percent of all the Palestinian land was occupied by Israel, the Palestinian settlements entered a new era. In the West Bank, where Jordanian rule was established, both rural and urban settlements experienced extensive changes[12]; A number of villages increased in size and several villages adopted municipal status.[4]

The urban settlements experienced building sprawl and changes in the general layout and size of these settlements in accordance with the expansion of the municipal boundaries under Jordanian policies.[13] The Armistice Line between Jordan and Israel and the new security routes in the West Bank brought about several changes to Palestinian city growth pattern and trends.

An outline Town Planning Scheme was prepared for Tulkarm in 1961. Several expansions of the boundaries of the town were also approved between 1961 and 1967.

In 1963, 1.8 km^2 were annexed to the city in its northeast part as well as the Al-Jarrad hamlet to the south. In 1964, Dinnabah was annexed in the eastern part of the city, which occupied an area of 0.75 km^2. In 1967, Shuweika 2.5 km^2, and Irtah 1.25 km^2, were annexed to the city.[19]

These changes increased the importance of the road separating the nearby satellite towns, which became the major connection of Tulkarm to the southern villages and Qalqelyah town. The Tulkarm Scheme of 1961 did not exert much influence on the fringes of Tulkarm that were planned under the previous Tulkarm Scheme of 1945. The annexation of Shuweike and Irtah in 1967 expanded the agricultural land to the north and south of Tulkarm yet no planning provisions were provided for these areas.

Tulkarm was one of the towns in the West Bank most affected by the Arab–Israeli War in 1948. The 1948 Armistice Line between Jordan and Israel cut through the greatest and most arable part of this land. At this line there was Israeli military presence at the western edge and Jordanian military at its eastern edge, which affected all life aspects of the city. Expansion in the southern part of Tulkarm boundaries was done to compensate for some of these losses and in response to the increasing demands of agricultural land as a source for food and work. The Jordanian planning system provided no compensation for the open land beyond the fringe of Tulkarm.

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With the new political circumstances after 1948, Tulkarem became a border town. Its main link was with Nablus to the east. It had other relationships with villages on its north and south but these were less important. During this period, Tulkarm had no connections or relations with the Arab towns and villages on the western side of the Armistice Line. Tulkarm was called "the town which sleeps at sunset time," because of the war status between the two sides of the Armistice Line. Segregation of urban fabric and social structure was obvious in this town during this era. The creation of two regimes gave Tulkarm a unique status as a border town isolated socially and physically from the surrounding communities.

Tulkarm Under Israeli Occupation (1967-1995)

In 1967, the Israeli occupation brought the third transformation to the system of the Palestinian settlements in the West Bank. The physical, social, and cultural system began to display the effects of the Israeli administration.[19] This period witnessed increasing decay and destruction of the traditional core of Palestinian settlements,[13] the increasing numbers and segregation by use in the structure of the settlements, and the increase in the ribbon development along access roads leading to towns and villages.[27] This was due to the Israeli plans to establish more colonies for the new Jewish settlers coming into the West Bank and Gaza.

Tulkarm also became an important connector between the West Bank and the industrial work centers inside Israel while at the same time it became an important service center for several Palestinian villages inside Israel as a shopping node where people could visit on weekends to buy their needs and do their shopping in the city.[17]

The central area of Tulkarm retained, in the Tulkarm Scheme of the 1970s, its previous character before the occupation with no significant change affecting this area. The only significant change during this period was the reduction in the area of residential zones within the central area. This would keep the old core of Tulkarm town and a small area on its north as the most densely built space. In addition the creation of Tulkarm refugee camp has its own impact on the physical spatial structure of the city where a densely populated block was planted at the eastern edge of the city (Figure 6).

According to the Tulkarm Scheme of the 1970s, the satellite towns of Tulkarm remained the same as they were before the occupation with exception that residential areas were designated on agricultural land to the south of Shuweika and between Tulkarm town and Irtah. This resulted later in annexing Shuweika and Irtah to Tulkarm city. The annexation of these two satellite villages decreased the green areas of Tulkarm and badly damaged its fringe; this became clear in that period because people

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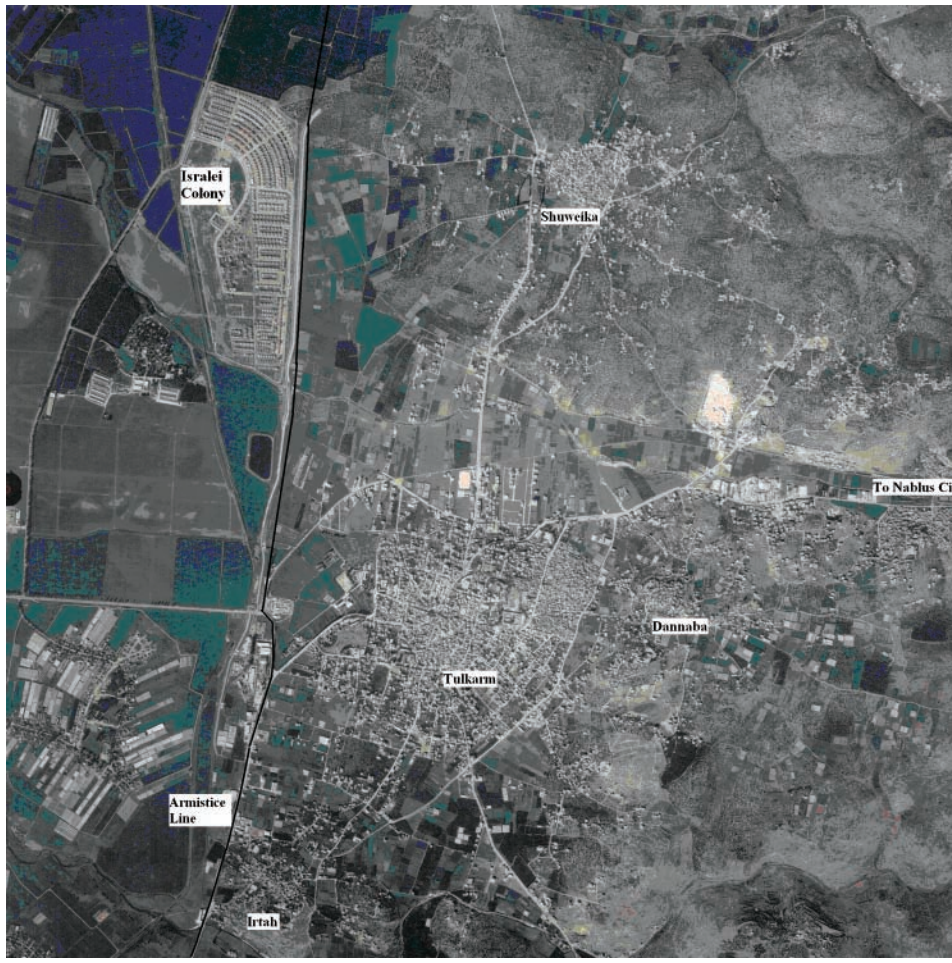

Figure 6: Tulkarm under Israeli Occupation (Tulkarm Municipality, archive section)

started to build their new houses outside the central area of Tulkarm—after earning money from working in Israeli labor market (Figure 7).

Regional Israeli planning strategies in the West Bank did not recognize the open land beyond the fringes of the Palestinian settlements; built-up areas and rural lands were separated islands in the minds of Israeli planners. This land distinction was considered by the Israeli physical planning system as an important element on which to impose direct Israeli control.

Concerning transportation, Israeli planners were facilitating access for their colonies, regardless of their impact on Palestinian communities. The road system was aiming at creating another layer of bypass roads connecting Israeli colonies in the West Bank and marginalizing the original Palestinian network.[25]

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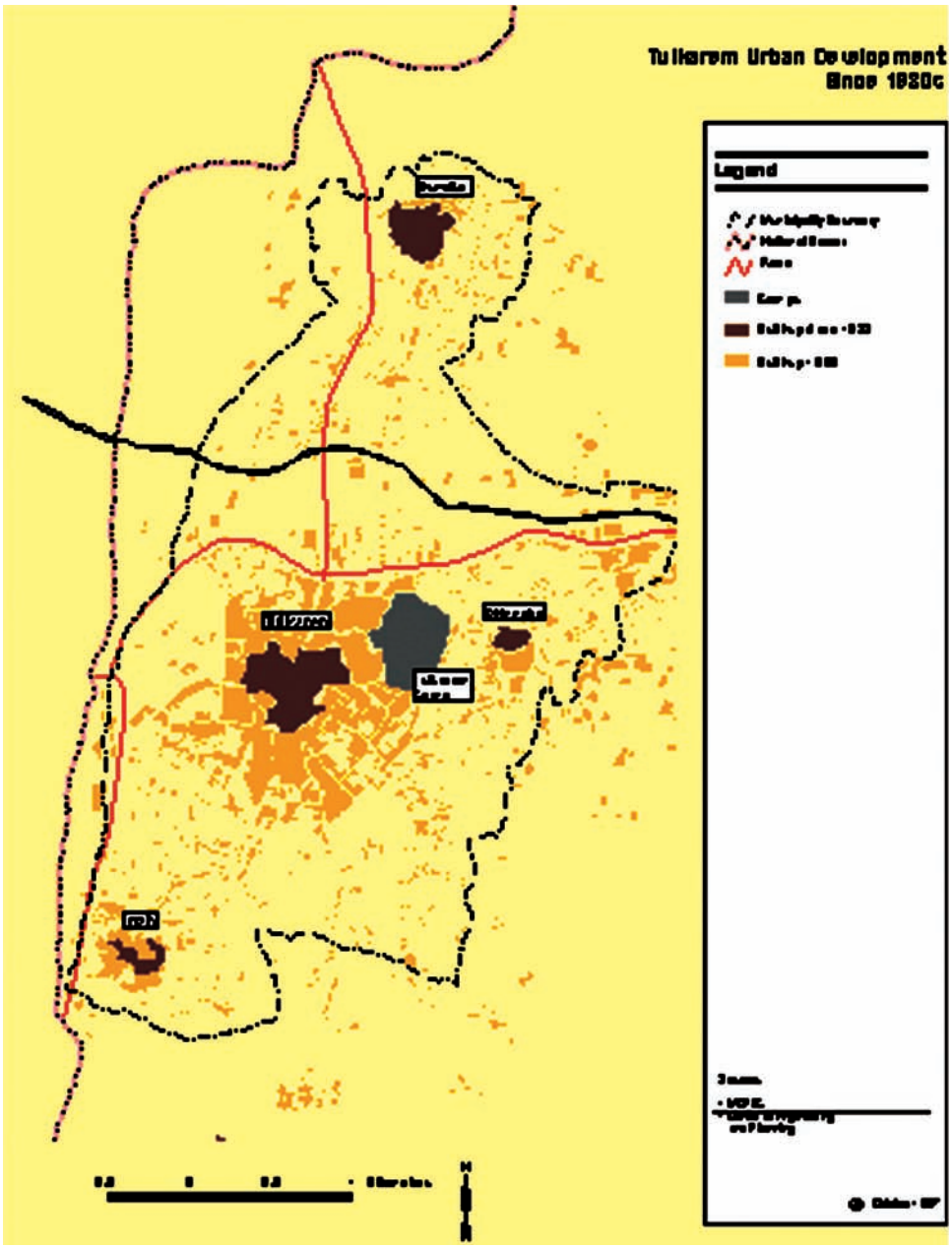

Figure 7: Tulkarm urban development (1930-1990)
Source: S. Thawaba, "Landscape Assessment of the West Bank Governorates," (Ramallah: Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, 1999)

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Tulkarm Under Palestinian Rule (1995-2005)

After the Oslo Agreement in 1994, most of the urban areas came under Palestinian direct rule while the fringes remained under the Israeli control. When the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) assumed self-rule in Gaza and the West Bank, it was faced with the double task of planning for its future needs and at the same time having to accommodate the planning needs generated by donor projects. For the Palestinians, neither the existing regional planning schemes nor their attributed regulatory framework within the occupied territories constituted an appropriate and relevant approach for meeting the overall needs generated through the contemporary developments whether political, socioeconomic, and physical.

Tulkarm did not witness any changes after the Palestinian Authority was created, except for preparing a planning scheme in 2002 that was approved by the authority. The scheme proposed lands being annexed to the city to accommodate urgent needs, such as residential, commercial, educational, health, and transportation uses. Unfortunately, this scheme was not implemented because of the change in the political situation when the second Intifada erupted and the Israeli army reinvaded the Palestinian cities (Figure 8).

For more than 100 years, Tulkarm's land area did not exceed 6 km^2. Once the PNA came to rule the area after the Oslo Accords, Tulkarm witnessed some growth when new plans were prepared for urban development in the area, but unfortunately the situation deteriorated again as the area became unstable because of political pressures and unrest (Figure 9).

Implications

Palestine's strategic geographic location has brought it under successive colonial regimes during its history of human settlement.[28]These regimes exercised state control through coercive power, taxation of land and its produce, and the bureaucratic structures of land management. The Jews coming to Palestine in huge numbers in the twentieth century required them to operate under the land code of the Ottomans, which was modified and "modernized" by the British Mandate, and which they transformed for the purpose of the state of Israel after 1948.[29]

Mandate land regulations facilitated the process of changing the facts on the ground, providing an array of legal instruments for capturing and controlling land, which were subsequently applied in Israel and after 1967 in the West Bank.[30] Compulsory purchase was provided for under the Ottoman land code, and the Mandate administration imported British compulsory purchase law and procedure in the 1924 Expropriation of Land Ordinance. The procedure was accelerated in the Acquisition of

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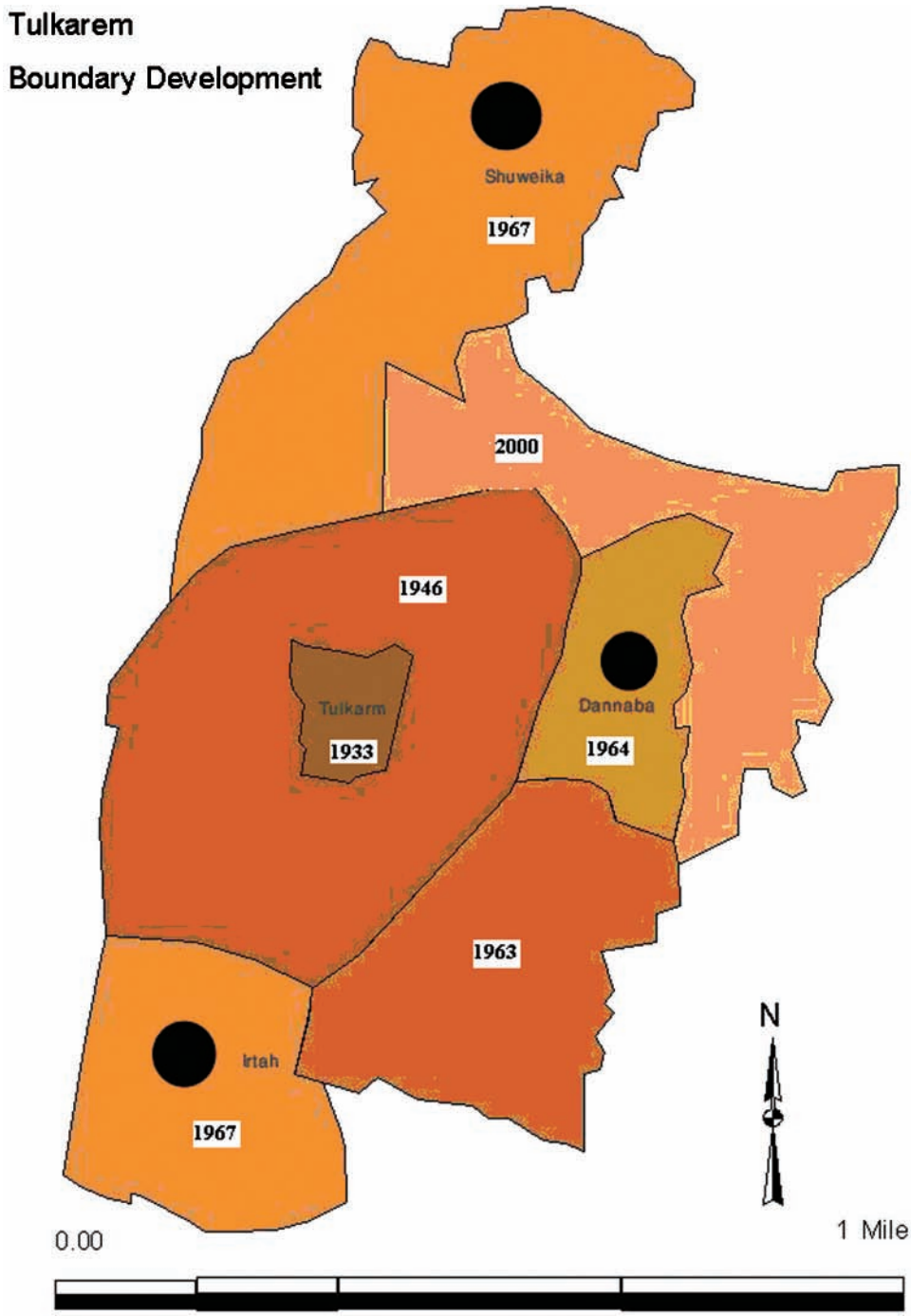

Figure 8: Tulkarm Annexation (Tulkarm Municipality, archive section)

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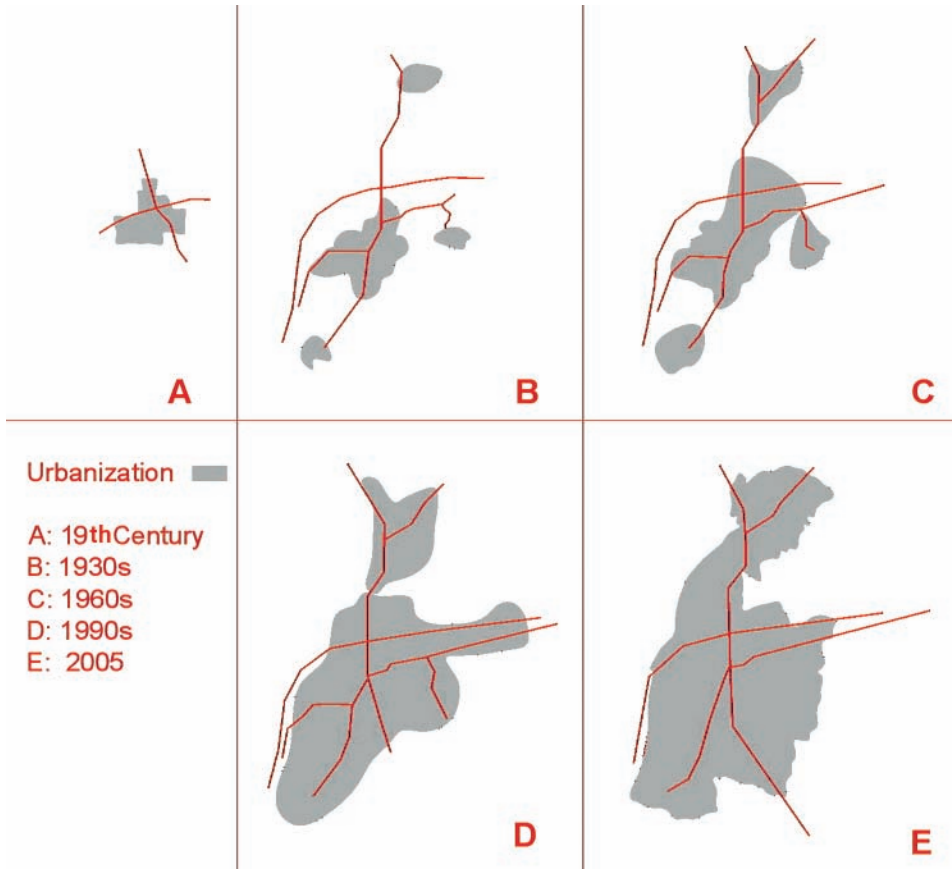

Figure 9: Tulkarm growth pattern

Land for the Army and Air Force Ordinance 1925, and further streamlined by the Land (Acquisition for Public Purposes) Ordinance 1943, which allowed the state to make rapid expropriation with minimal compensation. These sweeping powers were incorporated by the Israeli state in the Land Acquisition Law 1953, followed by massive confiscation of land for Jewish settlement and defense. Compulsory purchase is now rarely needed because the Israeli state owns most of the land.[31]

The plan-making process was employed to restrict the expansion of Palestinian villages, while encouraging Jewish settlements. Government-prepared plans for Palestinian settlements drew tight boundaries around them (often defining areas smaller than the built-up areas of the village), followed by the demolition of houses beyond the boundary, with no opportunity for community participation or objection, while liberal land allocations were accorded to Jewish settlements.[4]

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Land use zoning followed British planning practice, with a policy presumption against new construction on agricultural land. Not only were Palestinians discouraged from living on their agricultural land, but that land could be transferred to Jewish-controlled local authorities or to the state for forestry or green space, which could later become a Jewish settlement.[32] A further twist of the planning system has been the exclusion of about 100 small Palestinian settlements from official recognition. Although they usually predate the 1948 establishment of the state of Israel, as unrecognized settlements they cannot get permission for new dwellings, and public utilities are legally prohibited from connecting them to water, electricity, or telephone services: some 1,440 houses were demolished between 1993 and 1996.[33]

The Ottoman land code had prohibited building construction without permission, under pain of demolition, but the provisions were rarely enforced. The British Mandate planning regulations were potentially tougher, specifying large minimum plot sizes and limiting site coverage by buildings, which made it difficult to gain approval for extensions or new buildings. These regulations were rigorously applied by Israeli officials against Palestinians.[34] No building permits were issued without an approved town plan, or without legal proof of ownership, yet property title (especially in the West Bank) registered under the previous Ottoman code was not recognized, which indicated boundaries only by description, not on a cadastral map. In the occupied Territories Military Order 291 of 1968 ended new registration of land, so that Palestinians could neither get their historic land title accepted, nor could they register afresh.[25,35] Palestinians settlements, neglected in any case under Jordanian rule (1948-1967) in the West Bank, were denied basic infrastructure (sewage, electricity, roads), which the new Jewish settlements routinely received.[34] The effect of the Oslo Agreement (in 1993 between the Palestinian Authority and Israel) was translated by the Israelis to break up the West Bank further into some 120 disconnected Palestinian cantons, outside which development was restricted through planning and other regulations.[36] Even areas ostensibly transferred to the Palestinian Authority were kept under Israeli military control, and there was no physical boundary demarcation between the Palestinian Authority and Israel.[25]

Conclusion

Land tenure, administration, socioeconomic, geopolitical settings, and culture have their footprint and influence on urban planning and city structure and morphologies. This study tried to investigate these factors and their impact on one of the Palestinian cities during the past century. Major influencing factors in this study were land tenure, administration,

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and socioeconomic factors. Political stability and planning regulation also played a major role in city shape and structure in this study.

The preceding discussion shows that urban growth is a process where influences through history can be monitored and investigated. Consecutive regimes in the study areas affected urban growth in many ways. The Ottoman regime introduced different land tenure systems to the area in order to get more taxes for the Millet. The British Mandate introduced the survey system to foster the creation of a Jewish State in the area. Jordanians introduced a new administrative system and focused on developmental issues especially in the eastern part of the Jordan River, whereas the western part "West Bank" did not witness visible development. Israeli occupation introduced land confiscation and holding cities' boundaries. All these factors introduced by the different regimes in the area played a major role in the city morphology in the region.

Tulkarm as one of these cities in the area faced all these challenges and was shaped through history by these forces. Moreover, Tulkarem as a border city, where the Armistice Line penetrated the fabric of the city and cut it from its fertile farm land to the west was affected in a profound way. The presence of Israeli army at the western edge and the Jordanian army at the eastern edge (1948-1967) added more obstacles and affected the city morphology.

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